

300 people. It provides a variety of social services to the people of Fairbanks, including a very successful regional alcoholism treatment center, which was appropriately named the "Ralph Perdue Center."

Annette Freiburger, executive director of the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), is quoted in the News-Miner as follows, "Ralph has always served as a guide and inspiration for FNA. We recognized him as our FNA chief, the only chief we have in Fairbanks."

Ralph was also the devoted father of Karen Perdue Bettisworth, the distinguished former commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, and of Mona Perdue Jones. I extend to Dorothy, to Karen and to Mona, my deepest condolences and I join with the Fairbanks community in extending my appreciation to the late Chief Ralph Kriska Perdue for a job well done.●

RECOGNIZING LORRAINE JOHNSON, 2003 GEORGIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

● Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to Lorraine Johnson, Georgia's 2003 Teacher of the Year and a finalist for National Teacher of the Year.

This Coweta County seventh grade teacher was selected as one of four finalists for the National Teacher of the Year award by a panel made up of members from 15 national education organizations. She attended a ceremony yesterday at the White House where the President recognized this great achievement, and I was honored to be part of the audience.

Ms. Johnson has been an outstanding educator for over 18 years and has taught seventh-grade English and language arts at Arnall Middle School in Newnan, GA, for the past 8 years. This past year, Ms. Johnson has been on a sabbatical to travel across the State of Georgia giving speeches and conducting workshops for her peers at other Georgia schools.

Ms. Johnson told a reporter recently that she hopes she can inspire other teachers to have pride in their profession, and I think she is achieving that goal. Though her commitment and dedication to teaching she has influenced hundreds of students and made Georgia and our entire country a better place.●

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay a special tribute to Lorraine Johnson of Newnan, GA. Lorraine Johnson is an outstanding Georgia educator.

Lorraine Johnson was recently honored and recognized as one of four finalists by President George W. Bush at the White House for the National Teacher of the Year award.

Top notch teachers, like Lorraine Johnson, work day and night to make a difference to our Nation's young people as they prepare for their future.

These are our true American heroes in our communities, in our States and in our Nation. As the husband of a retired teacher who spent 35 years in the classroom, I know first hand the deep commitment, tough challenges, and endless efforts that go along with being a dedicated teacher. There is no doubt about it: Lorraine Johnson is a dedicated educator.

Lorraine Johnson teaches seventh grade language arts at Arnall Middle School in Newnan, GA. In my home State of Georgia, Lorraine's excellence is no secret. She was named Georgia's Teacher of the Year for 2003 for her remarkable efforts.

It was a real honor and a privilege to share in a special White House ceremony praising Lorraine's hard work and dedication. President George W. Bush, U.S. Secretary of Education Rodney Paige and many other lawmakers also commended Lorraine Johnson for her accomplishments.

Lorraine Johnson of Newnan, GA, is truly an outstanding educator. Not only is she an inspiration to Georgians, but she is an inspiration to all Americans.●

HONORING BOB PROFT

● Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I ask that the following two tributes honoring the life of the late Bob Proft—a proud Minnesotan, respected author, and brave World War II veteran—be printed in the RECORD.

The tributes follow.

[From the Star Tribune, Jan. 1996]

A TRIBUTE TO HEROES (By Chuck Haga)

Fifty years ago, Congress awarded a Medal of Honor to Jimmy LaBelle, a 19-year-old Marine from Columbia Heights and one of Bob Proft's best friends.

Proft, a B-17 radio operator during the war, always wondered what his buddy had done to receive the country's highest military decoration, but he could find no lists, no compilation of citations.

So Proft published a book. Working out of his sign-painter's garage in Columbia Heights, he researched the history of the medal, compiled lists of the recipients and their citations—from the Civil War through Vietnam—and in 1980 assembled an encyclopedic document of more than 1,100 pages. With co-publisher Mitch DeMars of Columbia Heights, he brought out an updated edition last year.

Now anybody can look up Jimmy LaBelle's name and find out just what he did before he died on March 8, 1945, on Iwo Jima.

"I don't think there's anything else I've ever done that's given me more satisfaction," Proft said.

He is a fit man of 70, earnest in his cause but self-effacing when talking about his own military service. "I didn't do anything heroic whatsoever," he said.

But heroes matter to him.

"It bothers me that you can talk to young people and they don't even know what the Medal of Honor is," he said. "They know John Wayne. They know 'Rambo.' Real heroes are forgotten."

LaBelle was a soft-spoken, unassuming teenager, "Just one of the guys growing up in the Heights," Proft said. During high

school, he worked at a hamburger joint called Virg's on Central Ave. He boxed in intramurals.

About 15 years after the war, Proft was painting a sign near Virg's. As he passed the hamburger joint, he thought about LaBelle and his Medal of Honor.

"It struck me that I didn't know anything about what he had done," he said.

He went to his local library, then to the Minneapolis Public Library. He wrote to government and military sources. A friend helped with the search, but they came up empty-handed.

In the late 1960s, the U.S. Government Printing Office compiled lists of recipients with their citations, he said, but that material was distributed only to federal depository libraries and couldn't be checked out.

Proft thought there should be something that could go in school libraries, something that young hamburger-flippers could stumble across.

"You can't sit and read this book like a novel," he said. "The citations would start blending together. But if you pick out a few citations at a time, they can really grip you."

The honor roll lists 47 Minnesotans, including Dale Wayrynen of McGregor, who received the medal posthumously for gallantry in Vietnam. Ten of the Minnesotans were natives of other countries: Germany, Austria, Norway, England, Ireland and Canada.

Proft's favorite is the citation for Nathaniel Gwynne, who was 15 and trying to talk his way into the 13th Ohio Cavalry on July 30, 1864, at Petersburg, Va. When the unit charged a Confederate position, Gwynne rode along.

The Yankees were forced to retreat, leaving their flag and battle standards. Young Gwynne charged back along, gathered up the colors and—despite having an arm almost shot off—brought them back.

"Somebody said, 'That young man should get the Medal of Honor,'" Proft said. "Somebody else said, 'Yes, but we'd better get him mustered first.'"

Since the medal was first presented in 1863, 3,420 have been awarded. Eighteen people received two medals.

An award requires at least two witnesses, and the action must involve "gallantry beyond the call of duty" and the risk of death.

In 1916, a congressional panel reviewed records of medals awarded to that point and rescinded 910, Proft said, because they didn't meet those standards.

Proft's book includes the citation for Alvin York, of course, the conscientious objector from Tennessee who became a World War I hero. Gary Cooper portrayed him in the film "Sgt. York."

And there are the stories of two living Minnesotans who received the Medal of Honor: Don Rudolph of Bovey, for actions in the Philippines during World II, and Mike Colalillo of Duluth, for actions against German forces near the end of the war in Europe.

Proft's labor was a good thing, said Rudolph, 74. "It gets it into the schools and the city libraries."

The Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Grand Rapids, Minn., bought 12 of the books for local schools and libraries, he said.

Rudolph has had his own copy of the book signed by about 200 recipients of the medal. Today, only 184 recipients are living.

"I've read the citations of everybody in the book," he said.

His own citation tells of his actions Feb. 5, when his platoon had been pinned down at Munoz, on Luzon: "While administering first aid on the battlefield, he observed enemy fire issuing from a nearby culvert. Crawling to the culvert with rifle and grenades, he killed

three of the enemy concealed there. He then worked his way across open terrain toward a line of enemy pillboxes. . . ."

He used grenades, a pick and his rifle to put seven pillboxes out of commission. "Later, when his platoon was attacked by an enemy tank, he advanced under covering fire, climbed to the top of the tank and dropped a white phosphorous grenade through the turret, destroying the crew."

Rudolph said he made it through all that without a scratch.

"I've said many times that I really don't know why I did it or why I got the medal," he said. "But I knew I had to do it. Otherwise we were going to lose more men."

It was about a month later that LaBelle died on Iwo Jima.

He was a private in the 5th Marine Division. On the night of March 8, as Japanese forces tried to break through American lines, a grenade landed in the foxhole that LaBelle shared with two other Marines.

He shouted a warning, then fell on the grenade, absorbing most of its impact with his body.

"His dauntless courage, cool decision and valiant spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of certain death reflect the highest credit on Pfc. LaBelle," his posthumous citation reads.

Medals of Honor awarded in major conflicts: Civil War 1,520; Indian campaigns (1861-1898) 428; Spanish-American War 109; World War I 124; World War II 433; Korean Conflict 131; Vietnam 239. Source: United States of America's Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients.

[From the Star Tribune, Apr. 13, 2003]

REMEMBERING A WRITER

(By Lou Gelfand)

Often he offered a touch of whimsy or a sweet bow to tradition, rarely a cheap shot or a critical word.

Those elements characterized the many hundreds of letters submitted to the Star Tribune editorial page over the years by Bob Proft, a retired Columbia Heights business owner.

His short missives filled with expressive words were an antidote to the stream of letters to the editor exhorting the citizenry to rise in anger and slay the dragon of the day.

That he knew only one letter every 30 days could qualify for publication didn't faze him.

His profundity could come in 14 words or less, as when Americans began packing their bags for Iraq: "Many things change from war to war, but never this: The goodbye kiss."

His change of pace was delightful: "The media exclaimed recently that Princess Diana has been dead four years. That means Mother Teresa has too. Ah, priorities."

That is not to say Proft had no passion.

"We cannot abide a government of the people, by the lobbyists, for the privileged and remain a bona-fide democracy. If this government of We the People is not, in fact and spirit, of us and by us and for us, we are operating with half-truths at best. And we are mocked by crafty hypocrites every time we are unctuously assured that we control this carefully designed system. In whatever manner and to whatever degree our representation is tainted, that is the manner and degree our government is a counterfeit of what our founding fathers created."

He lost his fettle for sports, but not for columnist Patrick Reusse.

"Older now, I seldom read the sports pages. However, thumbing through, I can't pass up Pat Reusse. For all the proper reasons I'm attracted to that face. It just came to me he reminds me of New York's Jimmy Breslin. With that face Reusse had to be a sports-writer or some guy living under the Third

Avenue bridge. Now don't get me wrong, I still don't know if I should like this guy. But my, my, how he can write! I'll bet my dentures Reusse is a closet poet. Robert Browning or Robert Service type, I don't know."

His love for holiday and tradition, spring and freedom and, above all, for family is expressed in these letters some readers may have saved to savor:

"Contracted Christmas greeting: Ho!"

"Sure signs autumn cometh: falling leaves, long sleeves."

"Our nation is free. For that reason we own everything we have to those we remember this day."

"Any force at any time in any country that can keep a loving father from a loving son for one second is a force of evil. A mob at any time in any country may have the power to prevent a loving father from reaching his loving son but it will never have the right."

His Veterans Day letter made him dear to the editor:

"While it is fitting and proper that we enjoy the fruits of our power and plenty, we must not forget those who destiny decreed should pay that price. Today is Veterans Day, set aside to commemorate that unique fraternity. Please, you needn't genuflect. Just give a knowing nod, and maybe a smile."

Proft enlisted in World War II and was training to fly bombers when peace came.

His love for country was funneled into publishing a 1,248-page book listing Medal of Honor Recipients and their official citations. Humility dictated that his initials, not his name, be on the cover.

The final letter from Proft, 78, arrived last week. He died at home early Thursday morning after a short illness. ●

HONORING DR. MARTHA MYERS

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to remember a selfless American, Dr. Martha Myers. Many know Dr. Myers as one of the two Southern Baptist missionaries recently murdered by extremists in Yemen. She represents the bests in missionary service. She was, by her aid to those in need, a demonstrated friend of the people of Yemen and in the end, she laid down her life for them. Greater love hath no one than this. Her death has touched me deeply as it has touched many worldwide. It has also, unfortunately, heightened our concern for Christian missionaries throughout the world.

Dr. Myers was educated in my home State of Alabama where she earned degrees from both Samford University and University of Alabama Medical School. The daughter of the State of Alabama's long time health officer, Dr. Ira Myers, she was educated and trained as an obstetrician. Instead of seeking monetary gain, like a modern day Nehemiah she dedicated the rest of her life in selfless service to the indigent families of Yemen. She spent 24 years as a medical missionary in Yemen ministering by example. Her colleagues have stated that she often slept in her office cubicle to save money to give to poor families in communities surrounding the hospital.

I find it particularly telling that it was her choice to be buried on the grounds of the hospital in Yemen. I

find this important because it shows a total and complete devotion to the difficult and selfless work she felt called to do. It demonstrated her total commitment without thought of turning back. Former professors and college friends say that her sense of calling to the field of missions was "crystal clear." They also said it was evident to everyone around her that this clear call to serve others empowered and motivated her even as a college freshman in 1963.

Dr. Martha Myers' ability to rise above personal interest in service of others goes far beyond what most people can conceive. Dr. Mike Howell, her former biology professor, summarized her life and commitment well in saying "There aren't many people willing to dedicate their life to people. That is the greatest calling of a Christian."

While the world has lost a selfless servant, We may hope that the life of Martha Myers will serve as an inspiration for others. It demonstrates that religious faith can be the basis for a life dedicated to others, even if those served have a different religion. Dr. Myers did not limit her patients to Christians. She served all in need, and she never forced her views on anyone.

In these days of terrorism and the prospect of war, our world should think deeply about the well lived life of Dr. Martha Myers. In such loving humility can come the seeds of a more peaceful world.

Some may say that this senseless murder proves that radicalism rules the day and that such acts can only be dealt with by war. But, perhaps not. Certainly, some radicalized terrorist, someone with a twisted view of their faith, can end a lifetime of work. Still, such evil acts cannot erase the good she has done. And, maybe, just maybe, the thousands of poor, sick, and dying that she treated and comforted will have a different view of the United States, a different view of the West, and a different view of freedom and faith as a result of her life well lived. In that we can all take comfort. ●

JARISSE J. SANBORN, B.G. U.S.
AIR FORCE

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great Alaskan upon the occasion of her promotion to Brigadier General in the United States Air Force.

I am speaking of Jarisse J. Sanborn who, on April 1, 2003, became the first active duty woman ever promoted to Brigadier General in the Judge Advocate Corps of any armed service in this country. Upon her promotion, General Sanborn was assigned to U.S. Transportation Command and the Air Mobility Command, where she serves as the Staff Judge Advocate to both commands.

General Sanborn, the daughter of a career Navy officer, began her Air Force career after graduating Magna Cum Laude from Randolph-Macon